

REMARKS

Status of the Application:

Claims 1-39 are the claims of record of the application. Claims 1-39 have been rejected.

Amendment to the Claims:

Applicants have amended the claims to make the claims clear as to the features of the invention.

Claim 1 as amended is described in FIGS. 2, 4, 5, and 6, and the descriptions thereof in the specification. The processing system, e.g., is disclosed by the server in FIG. 2, the associated user database in FIG 4. The selection is described in more detail in FIGS. 4 and 5. Claim 1 has further been amended to include that the processing system is configured to combine, i.e., merge at least some of the plurality of audio streams to form a combined stream. This is shown in FIG. 5 by summing element 58 that combines all of the audio streams, and in FIG. 9 that shows elements 106 and 110 that combine only some of the audio streams. Claim 1 also has been amended to include that a particular remote terminal of a particular user receiving the information sent to it is configured to spatialize the audio streams of the group corresponding to the particular user and the function of the combined stream to a pair of audio headphones signals such that the particular user, listening to the headphone signals over headphones, has the sensation that the audio streams of the group are emanating from their respective user locations in the virtual user environment relative to the location of the particular user, the headphone signals including binauralized reverberant signals generated according to the combined stream. This is disclosed, inter alia, in FIG. 6 and the description thereof. Claim 1 has further been amended to include the feature that the spatializing includes HRTF processing to take into account the orientation and location of the listening particular user in the virtual user environment, and to take into account direct sounds and early echoes, and reverberation according to a non-spatial combination of audio streams. This is disclosed, e.g., in FIG. 6

and the description thereof, and also on page 11, lines 18–20 that describes that the spatializing includes the methods described in International Patent Application published by the PCT as WO99/49574, designating the United States, and incorporated into the present application by reference. The methods in WO99/49574 include forming signals for playback over headphones by (a) for each of the streams and for each of a left and right ear output, convolving the input audio signals with an initial head portion of a corresponding impulse response mapping substantially the initial sound and early reflections for an impulse response of a corresponding to form a series of initial responses; forming a combined mix from the audio input signals; forming a combined convolution tail from the tails of the corresponding impulse responses; convolving the combined mix with the combined convolution tail to form a combined tail response; combining a corresponding series of initial responses and a corresponding combined tail response to form the audio output signal. This form of HRTF filtering thus takes into account direct sounds and early reflections of sounds within the virtual environment, and also reverberant sounds formed from a non-spatial combination of audio streams.

Claims 13, 14, and 15 have been amended to describe generating background signals, including in claim 14, a “dry” signal for use as background for signals within a room or area, and in claim 15, a “wet” signal for use as background to account for signals from an adjoining room or area.

Independent method claim 22 has been amended to recite features similar to those recited in system claim 1.

For independent claim 22, dependent claim 24 has been amended to replace at least some of its features with those similar to claim 13, dependent claim 25 has been amended to replace at least some of its features with features similar to those of claim 14, and dependent claim 26 has been amended to replace at least some of its features with features similar to those of claim 15.

Independent claim 28 that previously recited a system that included a plurality of user terminals has been amended to recite features of a user terminal that is coupled to a

processing system similar to that recited in claim 1, with the user terminal including features similar to those recited for a user terminal in claim 1.

For independent claim 28, dependent claim 29 has been amended to replace at least some of its features with those similar to claim 13, dependent claim 30 has been amended to replace at least some of its features with features similar to those of claim 14, and dependent claim 31 has been amended to replace at least some of its features with features similar to those of claim 15.

Independent computer-readable medium claim 33 has been amended to recite features similar to those recited in system claim 1.

For independent claim 33, dependent claim 34 has been amended to replace at least some of its features with those similar to claim 13, new dependent claim 40 has been created to have features similar to those of claim 14, and new dependent claim 41 has been created to recite features similar to those of claim 15.

Independent method claim 35 has been amended to recite a method of operating a user terminal that includes features similar to those of user terminal claim 28.

For independent claim 35, dependent claim 36 has been amended to replace at least some of its features with those similar to claim 13, independent claim 37 has been amended to be a claim dependent on claim 36 and to replace its features with features similar to those of claim 14. New dependent claim 42 has been created to recite features similar to those of claim 15.

Independent computer-readable medium claim 38 has been amended to recite features similar to those recited in method claim 35.

For independent claim 38, new dependent claim 43 has been created to include features similar to those of claim 13, new dependent claim 44 has been created to include features similar to those of claim 14. New dependent claim 45 has been created to recite features similar to those of claim 15.

Claims 16–21, 27, and 32 have been deleted without prejudice.

Claims 1–15, 22–26, and 28–31, and 33–45 are the claims of record after this amendment.

Claim Rejections -35 USC § 101

In paragraph 1 of the Office Action, Claims 33, 34, 37, and 38 were rejected because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter.

At lines 6 and 20 of page 7 of the instant specification, applicant has provided evidence that applicant intends the "computer-readable medium" in Claims 33, 34, 37, 38 and 39 to include transmitting audio "signals". Applicants disagree. The medium includes instructions that when executed cause transmitting audio streams. It was thus asserted that the claims are drawn to a form of energy.

Applicants respectfully disagree. First, the computer-readable medium recited in the specification and the claims has stored thereon executable instructions for causing a computer to carry out method steps. Nowhere is there a suggestion that the medium includes signals or are in the form of recited signals. The only signals recited in the application are audio signals.

By "instant specification," Applicants assume the Office is referring to the published PCT application. Page 7 starts with "- receive from a plurality of user-based audio sources..." and ends with "...for enabling the display of visual representation of the locations of at least". Assuming this is indeed what is meant by "instant specification," line 6 recited "transmit the locating data and selected audio streams as associated to a first listener." Line 20 recites "transmit the locating data and selected audio streams and associated locating data to a first listener". Each of these recited method steps. None of these suggests that any of the claims recites as its subject a signal. The claims are directed to a computer readable medium having executable instructions thereon. There is no evidence presented that this is not statutory subject matter. Applicants assert that a computer readable medium having executable instructions thereon that when executed

implement a method is statutory subject matter. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Note that the medium claims have been amended for other reasons, namely to add clarity. Applicant asserts that the new computer readable claims also recite statutory subject matter.

Claim Rejections -35 USC § 112 Second Paragraph (Indefiniteness)

In paragraph 2 of the Office Action, claims 7, 8 and 39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The office asserts that the limitations "M closest", "N audio sources" and "M loudest" of Claims 7, 8 and 39 are indefinite because they are not defined in the specification.

Applicants respectfully disagree. The last few lines of page 2 of the specification recite (repeated here without paragraph breaks):

“The user listener status may be based on at least one of the following:- the selection of M closest audio sources from N audio sources;- the selection of M loudest sources based on the amplitude of the source signal and/or the distance of the source from the listener; - a user-driven selection process determined by the subject user or other users;...”

Furthermore, FIG. 4 and the description thereof on page 13, lines 1–16 show and describe N audio streams and select M (out of N) functions 40.1 to 40.N that each select M out of N streams. On page 14 lines 10–12 further recite “In one version, the M closest sources can be selected from the N sources. Alternatively, the M loudest sources may be selected.” This certainly provides support. Furthermore, M out of N would be well understood by those in the art to mean a number M out of N possible ones, where M can be no larger than N. The Office is in error in this rejection under 35 USC 112, and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Note that the claims have been amended for other reasons, namely to add clarity. Applicant asserts that the new computer readable claims also recite subject matter that satisfies 35 USC 112.

Claim Rejections -35 USC § 102

In paragraph 3 of the office action, claims 1-15 and 22-39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Weiss (U.S. Patent No. 7,346,654).

Weiss indeed teaches a simulated environment in which there are a plurality of users. However, Weiss does not teach or make obvious several features of the present invention. For example, in determining who a listener hears, Weiss uses attenuation based on distance. There is no spatialization in Weiss.

Independent claim 1

Claim 1 has been amended to recite:

1. An interactive spatialized audiovisual system for linking a plurality of remote user terminals, the system comprising:

- A) a processing system coupled to a network; and;*
- B) an associated user database coupled to or part of the processing system, the user database including user data, including user status information for each corresponding user,*

wherein the processing system is configured to:

- A1) receive a plurality of audio streams and associated locating data from the remote user terminals each audio stream corresponding to a user as a source of audio, the locating data for virtually locating the users relative to one another within a virtual user environment;*
- A2) select at least one group of at least one of the plurality of audio streams based on status information in the user database, each group corresponding to one of the users,*
- A3) combine at least some of the plurality of audio streams to form a combined stream, and*
- A4) send to each of at least one of the remote user terminals via the network the respective selected group of audio streams and associated*

*locating data corresponding to the user of the remote user terminal,
and*

*A5) send to the at least one of the remote user terminals via the network
a function of the combined stream; the function possibly user
dependent,*

*C) wherein, a particular remote user terminal coupled to the network and
corresponding to a particular user is configured to:*

*C1) receive the sent group of audio streams and the function of the
combined stream;*

*C2) display a visual representation of the virtual user environment,
including representations of at least some of the users; and*

*C3) convert the audio streams of the group corresponding to the
particular user and the function of the combined stream to a pair of
audio headphones signals including binauralized reverberant signals
generated according to the combined stream,*

*D) wherein the converting includes spatializing the audio streams of the group
such that the particular user, listening to the headphone signals over
headphones, has the sensation that the audio streams of the group are
emanating from their respective user locations in the virtual user environment
relative to the location of the particular user,*

*E) wherein the spatializing includes HRTF processing to take into account the
orientation and location of the particular user in the virtual user environment,
and to take into account direct sounds and early echoes, and reverberation
according to a non-spatial combination of audio streams.*

Applicants assert that these features are not taught or suggested by Weiss. Weiss for example, does not disclose or suggest binaural spatialization as described by feature C3 and D, that is, ***converting the audio streams of the group corresponding to the particular user and the function of the combined stream to a pair of audio headphones signals including binauralized reverberant signals generated according to the combined stream, wherein the converting includes spatializing the audio streams of the group such that the particular user, listening to the headphone signals over headphones, has the sensation that the audio streams of the group are emanating from their respective user locations in the virtual user environment relative to the location of the particular user.*** Weiss for example, does not disclose or suggest ***the headphone signals including binauralized reverberant signals generated according to the combined stream.*** Weiss

furthermore does not suggest or disclose feature E: *the spatializing including HRTF processing to take into account the orientation and location of the particular user in the virtual user environment, and to take into account direct sounds and early echoes, and reverberation according to a non-spatial combination of audio streams.*

Weiss provides location sensation by attenuating the sound from each user according to the distance the user is from the particular user who is the listener. In its most sophisticated form, Weiss discloses an elliptical model of attenuation (see Weiss FIGS. 7 and 8, and the description thereof). Nowhere does Weiss suggest HRTF processing or binaural processing.

In rejecting previous claim 2 that included spatializing, now in claim 1, the Office suggested that such spatializing is disclosed in Fig. 4; and in col. 5 lines 22-27 of Weiss. Applicants respectively disagree. FIG. 4 of Weiss, as described in the cited part of col. 5 is a representation of a contour plot using a uniform model of sound distribution with three people in a virtual meeting room. No spatializing is described. Thus, the Office has failed to provide a prima facie case that the feature of spatializing in previous claim 2 is shown in Weiss. Spatializing as described in amended claim 1 using HRTF processing is not shown or suggested in Weiss.

In rejecting previous claim 3, the office suggest that Weiss in FIG. 4 and col. 5 lines 53-60 shows merging at least some of the audio streams into a merged audio stream, spatializing the merged stream so as to provide for a spatialized background audio effect in the audio reference frame at the user terminal. Applicants respectfully disagree. The cited part of Weiss describes how the intensities due to the three objects in Weiss FIG. 4 are attenuated. No combining is described in the cited feature. Thus, the Office has failed to provide a prima facie case that the feature of merging and spatializing the result of merging in previous claim 3 is taught in Weiss. This feature is now included in claim 1 by the headphone signals including binauralized reverberant signals generated according to the combined stream.

Thus the Office has failed to show that the features now included in claim 1 are taught or suggested by Weiss. Claim 1 and its features are patentable over the cited art.

Hence independent claim 1 is allowable over the cited references, and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

Independent claims 22

Independent claim 22 has been amended to claim:

22. A method of operating a processing system in communication with a plurality of remote user terminals comprising:

A1)receiving a plurality of audio streams and associated locating data, each audio stream corresponding to a user as a source of audio, the locating data capable of virtually locating the audio sources relative to one another within a virtual user environment;

A1A) determining user status data for one or more of the users;

A2)selecting at least one group of at least one of the plurality of audio streams based on the user status data, each group corresponding to one of the users;

A3)combining at least some of the plurality of audio streams to form a combined stream; and

A4)transmitting to each of at least one of the remote user terminals the respective selected group of audio streams and associated locating data corresponding to the user of the remote user terminal ; and

A5)transmitting to the at least one of the remote user terminals a function of the combined stream; the function possibly user dependent,

wherein, a particular remote user terminal corresponding to a particular user is configured to:

C1)receive the transmitted group of audio streams and the function of the combined stream;

C2)display a visual representation of the environment, including representations of at least some of the users; and

C3)convert the audio streams of the group corresponding to the particular user and the function of the combined stream to a pair of audio headphones signals including binauralized reverberant signals generated according to the combined stream,

- D) wherein the converting includes spatializing the audio streams of the group such that the particular user, listening the headphone signals over headphones, has the sensation that the audio streams of the group are emanating from their respective user locations in the virtual user environment relative to the location of the particular user, and*
- E) wherein the spatializing includes HRTF processing to take into account the orientation and location of the particular user in the virtual user environment, and to take into account direct sounds and early echoes, and reverberation according to a non-spatial combination of audio streams,*
- F) wherein the combined stream is spatialized either before or after transmitting so as to provide a background audio effect within the virtual environment.*

Features C3 and D and E are similar to features C3, D, and E in amended claim 1. As described above for claim 1, the Office has failed to provide a prima facie case that Weiss includes these features. Also as described above for claim 1, Weiss does not teach or suggest these features. Weiss, rather, provides a listener with spatial impression based purely in attenuation based on distance.

Furthermore, feature F is neither taught nor suggested by the cited references.

Hence independent claim 22 is allowable over the cited references, and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

Independent claim 28

Independent claim 28 has been amended to recite:

28. A user terminal for participating in a spatialized conversation in a network environment, the user terminal coupled to a computer network capable of streaming audio streams and associated spatialization information to the user terminal, the user terminal comprising:

A) a rendering system configured to:

A1) accept a selected group of audio streams selected from a plurality of audio streams, each stream corresponding to a user at a user location in a virtual user environment to the user terminal;

A2) accept associated locating data for virtually locating the users associated with the group's audio streams relative to one another within the virtual user environment,

- A3) accept a function of a combined stream formed by combining at least some of the plurality of audio streams; and*
- A4) convert the audio streams of the group and the function of the combined stream to a pair of audio headphones signals including binauralized reverberant signals generated according to the combined stream,*
- B) wherein the converting includes spatializing the audio stream of the group such that the particular user, listening to the headphone signals over headphones, has the sensation that the audio streams of the group are emanating from their respective user locations in the virtual user environment relative to the location of the particular user; and*
- C) a user interface including a display configured to present a visual representation of the virtual user environment, including representations of at least some of the users.*
- D) wherein the spatializing by the rendering system includes HRTF processing to take into account the orientation and location of the particular user in the virtual user environment, and to take into account direct sounds and early echoes, and reverberation according to a non-spatial combination of audio streams.*

Features A4, B and C are similar to features C3, D and E, respectively, in amended claim 1. As described above for claim 1, the Office has failed to provide a prima facie case that Weiss includes these features. Also as described above for claim 1, Weiss does not teach or suggest these features. Weiss, rather, provides a listener with spatial impression based purely in attenuation based on distance.

Hence independent claim 28 is allowable over the cited references, and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

Independent claim 33

Independent claim 33 has been amended to recite

33. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon executable instructions that when executed by one or more processors of a processing system in communication with a plurality of remote user terminals, cause implementing a method comprising:

- A1) receiving a plurality of audio streams and associated locating data, each audio stream corresponding to a user as a source of audio, the*

locating data capable of virtually locating the audio sources relative to one another within a virtual user environment;

A1A) determining user status data for one or more of the users;

A2) selecting at least one group of at least one of the plurality of audio streams based on the user status data, each group corresponding to one of the users;

A3) combining at least some of the plurality of audio streams to form a combined stream; and

A4) transmitting to each of at least one of the remote user terminals the respective selected group of audio streams and associated locating data corresponding to the user of the remote user terminal ; and

A5) transmitting to the at least one of the remote user terminals a function of the combined stream; the function possibly user dependent,

wherein, a particular remote user terminal corresponding to a particular user is configured to:

C1) receive the transmitted group of audio streams and the function of the combined stream;

C2) display a visual representation of the environment, including representations of at least some of the users; and

C3) convert the selected audio streams of the group corresponding to the particular user and the function of the combined stream to a pair of audio headphones signals, including binauralized reverberant signals generated according to the combined stream,

D) wherein the converting includes spatializing the audio streams of the group such that the particular user, listening the headphone signals over headphones, has the sensation that the audio streams of the group are emanating from their respective user locations in the virtual user environment relative to the location of the particular user, and

E) wherein the spatializing includes HRTF processing to take into account the orientation and location of the particular user in the virtual user environment, and to take into account direct sounds and early echoes, and reverberation according to a non-spatial combination of audio streams,

F) wherein the combined stream is spatialized either before or after transmitting so as to provide a background audio effect within the virtual environment.

Features C3, D and E are similar to features C3, D and E in amended claim 1 and claim 22. As described above for claim 1, the Office has failed to provide a prima facie case that Weiss includes these features. Also as described above for claim 1, Weiss does not teach or suggest these features. Weiss, rather, provides a listener with spatial impression based purely in attenuation based on distance.

Furthermore, feature F is neither taught nor suggested by the cited references.

Hence independent claim 33 is allowable over the cited references, and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

Independent claim 35

Independent claim 35 has been amended to recite:

35. A method of operating a particular user terminal that is part of an interactive spatialized audio facility including a networked computer and a plurality of user terminals linked to the networked computer, including the particular user terminal, the method comprising:

- A) transmitting from the particular user terminal to the networked computer an audio stream generated by a particular user and associated locating data capable of virtually locating the source of the audio stream generated by the user within a virtual environment, such that the networked computer can select groups of audio streams corresponding to each user, selectively combine at least some of the audio streams, for each group select associated locating data for the sources of the audio streams in the group, wherein the selecting is according to user status data available at the networked computer;*
- B) receiving at the particular user terminal a particular selected group of a plurality of audio streams selected on the basis of the user status data for the particular user, and further receiving associated locating data for virtually locating the sources of the group's audio streams relative to one another within a virtual user environment;*
- C) receiving at the particular user terminal a function of a combined audio stream formed by combining at least some of the plurality of audio streams corresponding to the users;*
- D) generating at the user terminal visual representations of the sources of the audio streams to indicate virtual locations of the sources in the virtual user environment, and*

E) converting the selected group of audio streams and the function of the combined stream to a pair of audio headphones signals including binauralized reverberant signals generated according to the combined stream,

F) wherein the converting includes spatializing the audio stream of the group such that the particular user, listening to the headphone signals over headphones, has the sensation that the audio streams of the selected group are emanating from their respective user locations in the virtual user environment relative to the location of the particular user, and ,

G) wherein the spatializing includes HRTF processing to take into account the orientation and location of the particular user in the virtual user environment, and to take into account direct sounds and early echoes, and reverberation according to a non-spatial combination of audio streams.

Features E and F are similar to features C3 and D, respectively, in amended claim 1, and feature G is similar to feature E in amended claim 1. As described above for claim 1, the Office has failed to provide a prima facie case that Weiss includes these features. Also as described above for claim 1, Weiss does not teach or suggest these features. Weiss, rather, provides a listener with spatial impression based purely in attenuation based on distance.

Hence independent claim 35 is allowable over the cited references, and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

Independent claim 38

Independent claim 38 has been amended to recite:

38. A computer-readable medium having stored thereon executable instructions that when executed by a processor in a particular user terminal, cause carrying out of a method of operating the a particular user terminal, the user terminal being part of an interactive spatialized audio facility including a networked computer and a plurality of user terminals linked to the networked computer, including the particular user terminal,, the method comprising:

A) transmitting from the particular user terminal to the networked computer an audio stream generated by a particular user and associated locating data capable of virtually locating the source of the audio stream generated by the user within a virtual environment, such that the networked computer can select groups of audio streams corresponding to each user, selectively combine at least some of the audio streams, for each

group select associated locating data for the sources of the audio streams in the group, wherein the selecting is according to user status data available at the networked computer;

B) receiving at the particular user terminal a particular selected group of a plurality of audio streams selected on the basis of the user status data for the particular user, and further receiving associated locating data for virtually locating the sources of the group's audio streams relative to one another within a virtual user environment;

C) receiving at the particular user terminal a function of a combined audio stream formed by combining at least some of the plurality of audio streams corresponding to the users;

D) generating at the user terminal visual representations of the sources of the audio streams to indicate virtual locations of the sources in the virtual user environment, and

E) converting the selected group of audio streams and the function of the combined stream to a pair of audio headphones signals including binauralized reverberant signals generated according to the combined stream,

F) wherein the converting includes spatializing the audio stream of the group such that the particular user, listening to the headphone signals over headphones, has the sensation that the audio streams of the selected group are emanating from their respective user locations in the virtual user environment relative to the location of the particular user, and ,

G) wherein the spatializing includes HRTF processing to take into account the orientation and location of the particular user in the virtual user environment, and to take into account direct sounds and early echoes, and reverberation according to a non-spatial combination of audio streams.

Features E and F are similar to features C3 and D in amended claim 1, and feature G is similar to feature E in amended claim 1. As described above for claim 1, the Office has failed to provide a prima facie case that Weiss includes these features. Also as described above for claim 1, Weiss does not teach or suggest these features. Weiss, rather, provides a listener with spatial impression based purely in attenuation based on distance.

Hence independent claim 38 is allowable over the cited references, and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

Thus, the independent claims as amended are allowable over the cited references. Thus therefore the dependent claims also are allowable over the cited references.

Comments on some of the rejections of the dependent claims

While Applicants have shown the independent claims are patentable over the cited art, it is worthwhile to point out some failures of the Office to show that the cited art shows some of the claimed features.

In the rejection of previous claim 12, the Office asserted that Weiss disclosed, in FIG. 4, barriers defining one or more chat rooms, with at least some of the audio streams in a particular room being summed or merged and spatialized to achieve a background reverberation effect characteristic of that particular room. Applicants respectfully disagree. Certainly FIG 4 does not disclose barriers. Weiss's FIG 11 however does show barriers. However, no reverberation processing of any sort is shown or suggested in Weiss. Hence the Office has failed to present a prima facie case against patentability of previous claim 12.

Claims 13, 14, and 15 have been amended to describe generating background signals, including in claim 14, a "dry" signal for use as background for signals within a room or area, and in claim 15, a "wet" signal for use as background to account for signals from an adjoining room or area.

In the rejection of previous claim 15, the Office claimed that Weiss teaches generating "wet" room signals using summed reverberated audio sources in FIG. 11 and col. 14, lines 40–60. Applicants remind the Office that "wet" signals are those from adjoining room and are processed by adding reverberation to a combination of the sound sources from the adjoining room. Weiss does not teach adding reverberation effects, but only attenuation. Hence the Office has failed to present a prima facie case against patentability of previous claim 15.

Neither Weiss nor any of the other prior cited art described generating background signals including either a "dry" signal for use as background for signals within a room or

area, and in claim 15 or a “wet” signal for use as background to account for signals from an adjoining room or area.

Thus, even if Examiner remains unconvinced by Applicants’ arguments for the independent claims, Examiner’s rejections of these dependent claims are also believed overcome.

Note Applicants have added claims that include features similar to claims 13, 14, and 15 to be dependent on each independent claim. These claims are also patentable over the cited art.

Claim Rejections -35 USC § 103

In paragraph 4 of the office action, Claims 16-21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Weiss in view of Virolainen: U.S. Patent Application Pub. No. 2003/0063574

These claims all depend on claims that were shown above to be patentable over Weiss, hence are also patentable. The rejection over Virolainen is moot in view of the transversal of the rejections under 35 USC 102.

For these reasons, and in view of the above amendment, this application is now considered to be in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited.

Conclusion

Claims 1–15, 22–26, and 28–31, and 33–45 are the claims of record after this amendment.

The Applicants believe all of Examiner’s rejections have been overcome with respect to all remaining claims (as amended), and that the remaining claims are allowable. Action to that end is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any questions or comments that would advance the prosecution and allowance of this application, an email message to the undersigned at

dov@inventek.com, or a telephone call to the undersigned at +1-510-547-3378 is requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Date

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